

✧ Bay Head ✧

'Soaring Bird' flies again in Bay Head

By Nick Malfitano

Members of the Bay Head Beautification Committee were recently successful in restoring the glory of a longtime town monument, the "Soaring" statue.

"Soaring" is a sculpture of an eagle mounted on a boulder, which, for many years, sat outside borough hall on Bridge Avenue. It was created by artist Jacques Neff, and presented to the town of Bay Head in 1976, to celebrate the United States's bicentennial.

Years of wear resulted in the bird falling from its stone perch.

Luckily, a master artisan came to the rescue, thanks to a connection through committee member Suzie Van Schoick.

"My friend's husband, Alfred Nickl, was a machinist," Mrs. Van Schoick said. "He chiseled and did that kind of work, and he brought the statue back to his place in New Milford, New Jersey about three months.

Mrs. Van Schoick described how Mr. Nickl finished work on

the statue, eventually returning the bird to its perch.

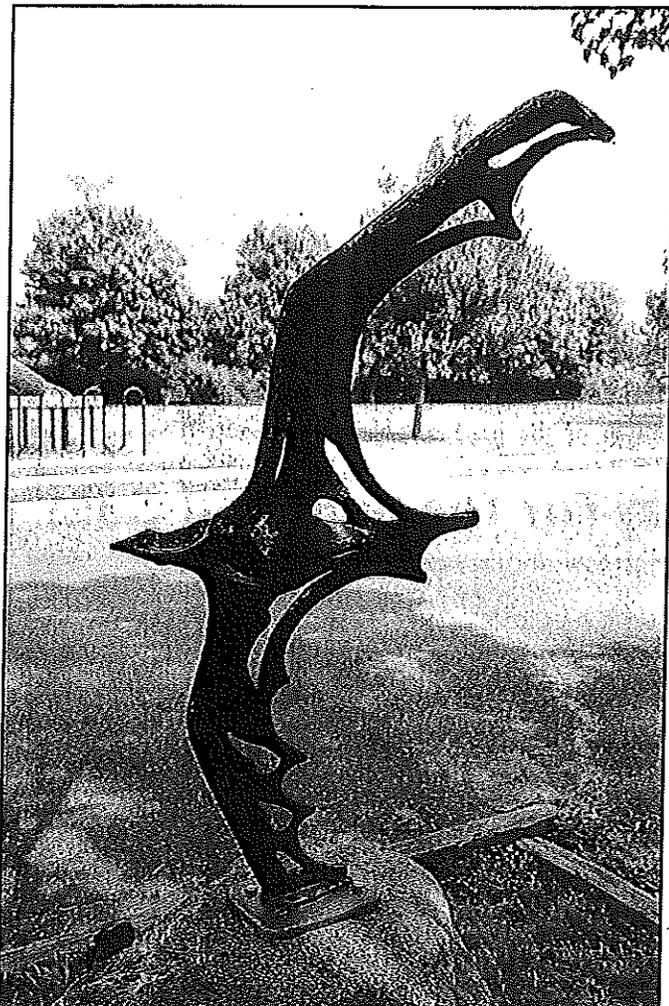
Near the end of his work on the statue, Mr. Nickl was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. The machinist died last September, before the statue could be returned to the borough.

However, according to Mrs. Van Schoick, Mr. Nickl's deathbed wish was that the bird could once again find a home in Bay Head.

The deceased machinist's wish has come true, as the statue was recently installed across from Centennial Park, where the Beautification Committee is planning to construct birdhouses for a planned bird sanctuary in the near future.

"We're going to put some birdhouses up," Mrs. Van Schoick said. "It's going to be really nice."

"The Bay Head Beautification Committee is delighted that 'Soaring' has been restored and placed at our new bird sanctuary," Ms. Van Schoick commented.



JOSEPH J. DELCONZO, The Ocean Star

The "Soaring Bird" statue, formerly located outside borough hall, has been moved to a new spot across from Centennial Park on Bridge Avenue in Bay Head.